



Principal's Report



Dear Parents,

Welcome back to term 2 – a term of school like we have never seen or experienced before. Overall we had a very positive start to the new term albeit with the occasional hurdle and obstacle as we enter into a new learning environment that we have never experienced before.

Having to plan, develop and implement both an online learning platform and an on-site supervision program simultaneously has produced an extraordinary amount of new and different challenges. Considering what has been requested of schools to undertake, I believe we had done an amazing job to provide an educational program to all of our children in very difficult circumstances. A huge thanks to all the teachers, education staff, IT support (school technician and parent – thanks Sam) and especially our front office ladies that have all done an incredible job .

Even though most of our families are physically apart from us during this time, the school will continue to produce a fortnightly newsletter and classroom blogs to ensure that we all stay connected this term. It is very important to us that we remain connected with our community and endeavour to keep as many things as normal as possible for our children.

Yesterday we began the school's remote and flexible learning with the release of Week 1 of the school's 'Learning at Home' program. The collapse and technical difficulties of the Compass student management platform at 8.45am was not a great start but overall the response and feedback from parents has been over-whelming supportive and positive.

The vast majority of our students were engaged in remote and flexible learning when just three weeks ago they were all on-site in classrooms. It's an extraordinary achievement that was only possible because of all the work that's gone on over the past few weeks.

As we progress into the term, and with positive and constructive feedback from parents and students, I believe the 'Learning at Home' programs will continue to improve and assist in filling the enormous hole left in the children's lives from not being able to attend school.

Although we will be including some online resources (links and videos) in our 'Learning at Home' program we have intentionally tried not to place in **too much** of a reliance or emphasis on direct online learning. We believed that students working from a booklet and using a device and the internet as a resource rather than as an instructor was more representative of the way we normally teach at NLPS. We are also concerned that many families may not have the resources required for full online learning and together with many of our parents we believe that many children may be experiencing too much 'screen time' during this period of their lives.

School Terms 2020

Term 1 28th Jan - 27th Mar

Term 2 14th Apr to 26th Jun

Term 3 13th Jul to 18th Sep

Pupil Free Days 2020

9th June

12th August (TBC)

2nd November

Public Holidays 2020

March 9 Labour Day

April 13: Easter Monday

June 8: Queens Birthday

Nov 3rd: Melb Cup Day

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For the parents that may want their child to be involved in more online educational activities, there are multiple sites and programs available online which a simple search can find if required.

Unfortunately, there have been some parents that have found it problematic and the program has not fulfilled their needs. But to produce a remote learning environment that is suitable for 520 children, living in all forms of home environments and requiring various levels of support from home is always going to be difficult. I ask these parents to try to support the program in a positive manner and continue to assist their child/ren to the best of their ability in these difficult times.

As of next week, the 'Learning at Home' units of work will be uploaded onto the school website prior to 11am on Sunday morning. A message and link will be also be sent out on Monday morning but having them available on the week-end will assist families that require that extra time to download or print a copy for their child before they begin the learning week.

If students are seeking an extra challenge, they are most welcome to have a look and undertake some of the activities in the other year levels 'Learning at Home' programs. They are available on the website.

Each family would have received a compass notification yesterday containing a distribution list of the teacher's direct email address. We request that parents only contact their child's teacher only when required and acknowledge that teachers may only be able to respond during school hours.

Some families may have also found it difficult with only having the one device at home or children sharing a device and if this is the case then please contact the office to arrange the loan of an additional ipad if this will assist at home.

And as I wrote to you on the week-end , *'never forget or under-estimate that good learning is far more than what is included in the 'Learning at Home' program. Practical learning such as baking a cake (science & maths), going for a bike ride (Bike Ed, Physical Education) , making a movie or a family concert (Writing, Drama, ITC), playing board games eg. Scrabble, Monopoly (Spelling, Maths, Reading) are all excellent ways you can provide quality and enjoyable learning at home.*

Having the kids home all day is often going to be difficult enough without having the burden of causing household disruptions because "you have to get your school work done". If there are times when you need to alter or change the program to make it better for everyone, please feel free to do so and together we can the best out of a difficult time for us all.'

We are only asking parents to do your best – no more. If the learning activity becomes over bearing or too difficult then it is time to stop and find alternate ways to enjoy this time you have with your child. This is what really matters.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, the school would also like to thank all those parents that have been able to accommodate the government's directive that that all students who can learn from home must learn from home.

The reason for this was reiterated yesterday by Victoria's Chief Health Officer, Dr Brett Sutton, who stated: "My advice to the Victorian Government was and continues to be that to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), schools should undertake remote learning for term two.

This is because having around a million children and their parents in closer contact with teachers and other support staff has the potential to increase cases of coronavirus not just in schools but across the community.

By having remote learning, it can contribute to physical distancing and therefore supports efforts to drive transmission down."



Principal's Report (continued)

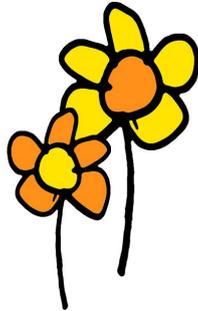
The transition into Term 2 has not been easy work for anyone, but we should be reassured – there is a very good reason to be taking this significant step.

We will begin our regular fortnightly newsletters next week with different stories and updates from our students learning at home and also what's been happening around the school in your absence. If any parent or community groups have messages that they would like to share, or in some way we can help out our local businesses or clubs during these different and difficult times, please send them to the school.

Until then, take care, stay safe and enjoy this wonderful opportunity you have with your family.

David Moss
Principal





 **Newport Lakes** Primary School

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Term 4—5th Oct to 18th Dec

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